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STATINTL

THE CASE OF THE MOUNTAIN CLIMBERS

THE
THIRD
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WAR

On February 9 the trial of five Warsaw University graduate students began at Warsaw's Palace of Justice. The accused: Maciez Kozlowski, an archeologist; Jakub Karpinski, son of a well-known architect; Christophe Szymbuski, a teaching assistant in physics; Maria Szpakowska, studying for a doctorate in philosophy, and Maria Tworkowska. These five were among fifty students and young teachers arrested last summer. A few—notably, the son of the head of the official Polish writers' organization—have been released. It is expected that the others will be brought to trial in batches, though perhaps without public sessions. Attendance at this first trial is restricted to those directly involved, a few representatives of the official press, and a single Western reporter, Bernard Margueritte, Warsaw correspondent of Agence France Press, the official French news agency.

At 5 A.M. January 27, the Czech secret police arrested the young Czech journalist, Jiri Lederer, an admirer of Alexander Dubcek, who wrote for the suppressed magazine, *Literarni Listy*, chief organ of Czechoslovakia's brief and poignant "Spring." Two other young Czech writers were picked up the same day. The Czech press has linked these arrests to the Warsaw trial, finding significance in the fact that Lederer was *Literarni Listy's* Warsaw correspondent in April 1968.

The Warsaw defendants are accused of "hostile and harmful activity against Poland," and of having committed "not only in Poland . . . a series of crimes against the good name and the interests of Poland and of socialism." They are also declared to be agents of "the center of the reactionary thinking of Polish émigrés," *Institut Littéraire*, headed by Jerzy Giedroyc, and its magazine, *Kultura*, "financed by Radio Free Europe and CIA." Thus directed (the charge further reads) they attempted to set up an espionage network, carried out "work of diversion," spied for *Kultura* and distributed

Kultura literature. The indictment adds that *Kultura* is in active collusion with international Zionism and both the Polish and the Czech newspapers stress this theme—"the roots of this case stretch all the way to Tel Aviv."

Stalinist Revival

This trial (or series of trials), with the "espionage networks" and "diversion" supported by intelligence agencies of foreign powers, etc., revives the pattern of Stalin's day—though the villainous imperialist power was then usually Britain, France, Germany or Japan. (It is not without interest that today, in spite of Mr. Nixon's blandishments, it is the U.S.) The strategic purposes are plain: to crush what remains of the spirit that blossomed in the 1968 Czech Spring and was felt throughout Eastern Europe, especially in Poland; and, in passing, to bolster the current anti-Israel, antisemitic campaign. But in addition the trial has the tactical aim of combatting, if possible destroying, the influence of *Kultura* among the youth and intellectuals of Eastern Europe. The Polish government's anxiety to eliminate *Kultura* is so intense, indeed, that during the "exchange of views" between France and Poland that took place in Warsaw Feb. 2-3, the Poles demanded that the French government "restrict" *Kultura*, which is published from Maisons-Laffitte, a Paris suburb.

Veteran readers of this column will recall the *Institut Littéraire*, which through the magazine, *Kultura*, and scores of books has for 22 years been the free publishing house of and for East Europeans. Not a few readers have, in fact, helped to make possible the *Institut's* continuing activities, whose success the Polish government now confirms so patently.

Though the pattern of the trial is Stalinist, and expressive of the Stalinist spirit that has swelled throughout Eastern Europe during the past year and a half, the defendants no longer play the role assigned to them in the typical Stalinist scenario. Though scornfully

dismissing the vulgar frameup lies about "diversion," "espionage," CIA money, etc., they gladly and proudly affirm most of the specific acts listed in the indictment. Many of those arrested belonged to the university mountaineering club (whence the popular designation, "The Trial of the Mountain Climbers"). Kozlowski and several of the others have testified how in 1968 and 1969 they crossed the Tatra mountains between Poland and Czechoslovakia so that Poles could have true accounts—there being only lies in the official press—of the Czech Spring and then the invasion, and Czechs know of the support of the Polish students. They collected the documents concerning the events in both countries and transmitted them to *Kultura*. *Kultura* was thereby enabled to publish the record, and to distribute it, in part with the help of the arrested students, in both countries. Kozlowski recalled with particular pride how he had crossed the Tatras in January 1969 to take part in the funeral procession in Prague for Jan Palach, and how he placed on the coffin a wreath of flowers in the name of the students of Poland.

Hear No Evil

The Case of the Mountain Climbers is a symptom of prime importance in estimating the current situation and trends within Eastern Europe. Recognizing this, the chief newspapers of both Eastern and Western Europe have been giving it prominent and daily coverage. I have before me as I write, cuttings or photostats of Polish, Czech, Russian, Italian, French, British and German newspaper accounts. So far as I can discover, however, this is the first account of this case in the American press. Perhaps it is felt to be too much out of phase with the negotiation-not-confrontation attitude that Mr. Nixon and his opponents now compete in displaying. (While correcting proofs, I note a brief report in the *Washington Post* that the five have been convicted and sentenced to prison.) □

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